



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Navy SEALs – 50 Years of Service

“Over the past 50 years, Navy SEALs have become one of the finest irregular warfare forces in the world. President John F. Kennedy and CNO Arleigh Burke would be very proud of the U.S. Navy’s answer to their requirement for a naval unconventional warfare capability in the early 1960s. From the Mekong Delta to the Hindu Kush, deep at sea or far into the desert, Navy SEALs have proven themselves tough, versatile and successful. Forged from the same steel as their predecessors, today’s SEALs will continue to adapt, evolve and win, as our Navy and Nation need.”

– Rear Adm. Sean A. Pybus, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command

This year, [Naval Special Warfare \(NSW\)](#) celebrates the 50th anniversary of the first two SEAL Teams. In the late 1950s and early 1960, Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy determined a need for developing an unconventional warfare capability to counter the Soviet threat. In a letter dated Dec. 11, 1961, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Arleigh A. Burke officially authorized creation of the [SEAL Teams](#) in the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, effective Jan. 1, 1962. SEALs are conducting some of our nation’s most critical missions, proving they are as relevant today as they were when they were first created. NSW forces work jointly and with U.S. allied and coalition partner nation forces to ensure security and stability throughout the [world](#).

Legacy of Success

- Since World War II, NSW forces have answered the call for tough and dangerous duty, and achieved a remarkable record of success.
- The first SEAL platoons devastated Viet Cong networks within their operating areas of South Vietnam, stifling enemy strategy and operations.
- SEALs honor this history and reputation by committing themselves to the mission, and remembering those who have led and sacrificed before them.
- SEAL Teams have an impressive battlefield record, having earned every significant military award, including five [Medals of Honor](#). Those successes do not come without countless acts of heroism and profound losses. The sacrifices of injured and [fallen SEALs](#) and their families will never be forgotten.
- Two ships have recently been named after SEAL Medal of Honor awardees, [USS Michael Monsoor \(DDG 1001\)](#) and [USS Michael Murphy \(DDG 112\)](#).

Today’s SEAL Teams

- NSW forces work jointly and with U.S. allied and coalition partner nation forces to ensure security and stability throughout the various regions of the world.
- SEAL Teams continue to locate and kill or capture high-level terror actors and networks threatening the U.S.

The SEAL Mindset

- SEALs remain [physically](#) and mentally tough.
- Quit is not in their vocabulary. Teamwork and confidence are keys to their success.
- Bold, precise plans executed with surprise and aggression are trademarks of their work.

Key Messages

- SEAL Teams continue to be in demand today as they were when they were first established 50 years ago.
- The [SEAL Ethos](#) that ensures success on and off the battlefield will continue to inspire and define the NSW community for years to come.
- SEALs, like the legacy organizations that preceded them, will continue to take on the toughest of missions, under extreme circumstances and in the most arduous of environments.

Facts & Figures

- In 1962: 2 SEAL Teams/20 Officers/100 Enlisted
- In 2012: 10 SEAL Teams, active & reserve/600 Officers/1,900 Enlisted
- SEAL teams are based in Coronado, California; Little Creek, Virginia; and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. SEALs are deployed in more than 30 countries around the world.
- Strategic SEAL missions include Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Counter Terrorism and Foreign Internal Defense.